

Clark Who? Training Center Cuts Travel Time

The Clark Public Safety Training Center is like the younger and lesser-known of a pair of brothers.

The CHP Academy in West Sacramento has had an international reputation for over 25 years. The Clark Center in Riverside County is less than four years old, and the CHP has been involved there for just over a year.

The Clark Center, however, provides a valuable service by meeting the CHP's increasing needs for training in a time- and cost-effective way.

The center is a very different facility from the Academy. While the Academy is the spiritual heart of the Department as well as a training center, Clark is a joint facility operated with the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Riverside County's Fire Department, Sheriff's Department and Community College.

The impetus for joining the Clark Center's agency roster was space.

"The Academy has a limited amount of space — nine classrooms, of which seven are dedicated to existing programs or used only for our cadet classes. That leaves two classrooms for the 70 different courses we offer CHP officers and staff," said Lieutenant Darren "Ike" Iketani.

Iketani headed a one-year 1998 pilot project which confirmed the workability of Clark for the CHP's training needs. "Clark has 23 classrooms with a capacity from 10 to 100 people," he said.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department opened Clark in 1996 at a remodeled 400-acre former US Air Force headquarters. "It had been closed for three years before the Riverside Sheriff's office took it over. There were rattlesnakes in the light fixtures and coyotes in the halls," Iketani said.



AN AERIAL VIEW of the Clark Training Center shows the administration and classroom building.

The center now includes modern guest and student rooms equipped with desks and refrigerators, a cafeteria, offices, jogging trails and track.

Cost savings result from fewer airline ticket purchases or lower auto mileage expenses for Southern California employees, depending on how they travel.

Clark also reduces work time spent in travel. "From Southern California, it can be 10 hours by car to West Sacramento, but four hours at the most each way to Riverside," said Iketani.

CHP projected that during the pilot project 500 employees would receive training at Clark. Instead, 1,000 attended and more employees used

Clark's auditorium for meetings. Attendance by trainees is expected to double in 1999.



THE ENTRANCE of the center welcomes students with new landscaping that includes a waterfall.

COMMISSIONER SPIKE HELMICK, Riverside County Sheriff Larry Smith and Deputy Commissioner Bill Carlson officially open the new communications operator training center at the Clark Training Center. Instructor Nancy Lauber holds one end of the tape.



The CHP's Clark offerings include all the standard out-service courses including communications operations, radar training, basic criminal investigation, emergency medical technician, evidence gathering and hazardous materials, among others.

Agencies can take advantage of experts from the other departments by pooling their resources. "We provide training for agency partners in everything the CHP offers and they provide training back in their areas of expertise," Iketani said.

One unexpected benefit is the number of recruiting contacts CHP staff makes at Clark. "We're refilling our recruiting publications rack every couple of days," he said.

"It's a great opportunity to expand our recruiting efforts and provide a look at what the CHP is really like."

A catalog of classes being offered at the Academy and Clark Training Center has been created and is available from the CHP staff at the center or on the Internet at Clarktraining.org



COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT waits under plastic during the construction of the communications training center.